Interesting Chat and Information for the Playgoer

Criticisms Do Not Exist for This Actress

Ruth Chatterton Has Not Read a Newspaper Comment on Her Playing in Five Years

Dramatic criticism, so far as it influences Ruth Chatterton, might as well cease to be a familiar and prominent feature of modern journalism. On her own admission, the actress who is co-starring with Henry Miller in "La Tendresse" at the Empire Theater has not read a line of criticism about herself in the last five years. Not because she has no faith in criticism does Miss Chatterton shun the printed word. In fact, she invites criticism at dress rehearsals and out-of-town performances, criticism which can be discussed and considered and applied before the New York premiere of a play. For an actor or actress to read criticisms and to worry about them after a metropolitan opening is a futile and dangerous thing, in her opinion.

"Five years ago, when Emma Dunn was playing in 'Old Lady 31,' she told me that I should never become emancipated until I learned not to read criticisms. She told me to work and study until I felt that I was putting all that I was capable of into a role. She advised me to listen to criticisms at dress rehearsals and at out-of-town performances and to modify my conception of the role if I thought the criticisms warranted it. Preparation in advance counts most in a new play, and to me changes following an opening in New York are futile. I have heeded Miss Dunn's advice. I admit it took will power to do so at first. Now it would take will power to bring myself to read criticisms. I have found the emancipation which Emma Dunn promised me."

Miss Chatterton was in a mood for confession. She spoke freely of her attitude toward the theater, of her ambitions and hopes for the future. Laughingly she declared that she is not commercial and that she hates anything in the theater that makes money. Yet in only one production in which she has appeared has Miss Chatterton failed to have a long run. It is not impossible, she suggests, to attempt to do the finer things in the theater and still be successful.

"I should rather do a 'Mary Rose' and make no money at all than head the greatest money-maker in dramatic history. I have been a Barrie fan since I was a child and to me 'Mary Rose' is his best play. I don't believe Barrie ever has done or ever will do anything finer. The plays of the last ten or twelve years have driven the audiences which liked the real intellectual things in the theater to music to find the stimulus they used to find in the theater. Of course, I am not important enough in the theater to say so, but I hope to continue to do things that are worthy, even though there should seem to be no audience for them, hoping in time to win back part of the audience, at least, which has gone over to the symphony orchestras, the recitals and the opera."

For a long time Ruth Chatterton has dreamed of an American conservatory of the theater where the big figures of the American stage would teach the young men and women who aspire to become actors and actresses. She has talked about it to those who would be in a position to help establish it, but apparently it is still a dream, and she fears it will remain so.

"We seem so lethargic here that I am afraid there will be no conservatory like the Conservatoire in France. Then, perhaps, the public here is too mixed for such a thing. I love the frankness of the French theater, of its authors and its methods. The frankness of the French theater is much preferable to the suggestiveness of the American theater. Here things are suggested over and over again until they simply become nasty."

Bataille in "La Tendresse," Miss Chatterton believes, has written about a very real and human phase of life. A highly intellectual man, when he seeks companionship, does not seek intellectual companionship. In fact, he hates it. It is the old story of the attraction of opposites.

"The brilliant author who is pictured in 'La Tendresse' finds companionship in an ordinary little actress, but clever in her way. She is a young, healthy person, and occasionally she cannot help reverting to type. But she provides just the outlet which the author seeks. In the last act, when he has broken with her, he has for a time the companionship of a brilliant actress of the Comedie Francaise and she bores him to death. It is not what he seeks."

"Chuckles" at Columbia

Jean Bedini's "Chuckles of 1922," which had the summer run at the Columbia Theater last summer and subsequently played a ten weeks' engagement at the Oxford Theater, London, will return to the Columbia for one week, beginning to-morrow afternoon. Those who appear in the burlesque production this year are Cliff Bragdon, Norma Barry, "Coo-Coo" Morrissey, Jane May, George Christian, James Johnson, Blanchard Blauvette, Billy Wells and the Eclair Twins, Joseph Nelson and others. In the vaudeville program are the Sutherland Saxophone Sextet, the Oxford Girls, Betty Burnett and Her Girls and other acts.

At the Hippodrome

"Better Times" reaches its fiftieth performance to-morrow. Orlando's Horses will be seen in the weekly change of routine, and new specialties will be interpolated in the fan ballet and in the first scene of the aquatic spectacle.

VIVIENNE SEGAL in "THE YANKEE PRINCESS."

HELEN HOLMES in "THAT DAY"

JANE COWL in "MALVALOCA"

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BLANCHE RING in "AS YOU WERE"

SOPHIE TUCKER, at PALACE

MARIA KOUSNEZOFF in "REVUE RUSSE"

WILDA BENNETT and WALTER WOOLF in "THE LADY IN ERMINE"

JOSEPHINE VICTOR in "DOLLY JORDAN"

GILDA LEARY in "THIN ICE"

HARRY LAUDER, LEXINGTON THEATRE

Sans Bullfighters And Castanets Is Quinteros Malvaloca

Theatergoers may find elements of surprise in the Equity Players' production of "Malvaloca," coming to the Forty-eighth Street Theater to-morrow evening, for there isn't a bull fighter, a dancing girl or a castanet in the piece.

The Spain of Carmen, the Spain of quick-tempered gallants, impossibly romantic senoritas, of knives and tambourines—the tourist Spain—here gives way to the real Spain. Your stage Spaniard, like your stage Englishman with his "Don't-cher-know," is due for the discard.

The point is that there has been a "new movement" in the drama of Spain, as there has been in other lands. The dramatists there have revolted not only against the bombastic dramas of their forefathers, but against what they term the "picturesque lying" of writers from other countries who have spent a week end in Madrid or Seville, have seen the sights laid out for tourists and go away to record their romantic impressions for eager and movie-minded audiences. Playwrights like Benavente and the Quinteros have consciously set out to offset this false picture by recording the true life and atmosphere of the country. Happily their plays are no longer strangers to the American stage.

Sunshine — yes! "Malvaloca" is bathed in sunshine. And romance, too. Not the old studied and bombastic romance, the melodramas, the sentimental heroics and surface glamour of other days, but a perfectly natural bent toward pretty love stories, mixed laughter and tears and the full color and flavor of life, born of the national way of living and thinking.

In such a setting, of course, the new theater movement has not taken on the gray angle that is so striking a feature of modern drama in more Northern countries — Russia, Scandinavia and Germany. Being honest and sincere has not meant to the writers of "Malvaloca" and "A Sunny Morning," or to the writer of "Bonds of Interest," that they must be severe, chill and tragic. They do not invite their audiences into the dissecting room or hale them before the pulpit or the bench.

"Malvaloca" is perhaps the best example of this new drama of Spain, in that it is honest and atmospheric and based on actual living, and yet gets nowhere as a solution of the problems of the world. It is content to be entertaining, colorful and, at the high points, dramatically moving. It tells the double story of a broken bell and its mending, and of a woman whose past has been, both pleasurable and questionable until she faces the fires of a real love. The authors found their idea in the lines of an old song:

"This little girl of whom I tell,
Should be recast, like a broken bell."

It would be a fine tragic theme for an Ibsen or a Hauptmann or a Galsworthy, and opportunity for triangular humor for many a French playwright. But the Spanish Quintero brothers wrote it characteristically, straightforwardly, full of sunshine, regrets and tendernesses, and in the end avoiding tragedy.

The Equity production will be colorful, as Woodman Thompson is designing the settings and costumes. He will do all Equity's plays this season, and these Spanish settings are in the vein in which he shines best. Augustin Duncan is directing the production. Although the Equity has wisely made a rule against starring or featuring any actor, it is allowable to say that Jane Cowl, the beautiful, is playing the title part.

New Palace Bill

Sophie Tucker, assisted by Ted Shapiro and Jack Carroll; Bessie Barrascale in "Picking Peaches," Vincent Lopez and his Pennsylvania Orchestra, "Ned Wayburn's Dancing Dozen," Harry Burns and company, Mehlinger and Donaldson, Joe Rome and Lou Gaut, the Hegedus Sisters and Merion's Dog Actors compose the week's bill.

Helen of Troy Story In New French Play

From The Tribune's European Bureau

PARIS, Sept. 20.—Now that autumn is at hand the Parisians are flocking back, and the purely French theaters are reopening to meet the popular demand. Of course, the international theaters, where the French are never to be seen, such as the Folies and several others in that order, have been packed with full houses all summer, due to the tourist season.

The Théâtre Edward VII has just put on a new drama by Noziere called "The Return of Helen" and built around the Trojan wars. Many plays have been devoted to the beautiful Helen of Grecian legend, but this is the first imaginative effort to show the consequences of her return to Sparta.

Helen returns, as the title indicates, but she is as beautiful, ardent and gallant as ever, so she has no difficulty in inducing faithful old Menelaus to take her back to his palace. But she, as intriguing and faithless as ever, decides that life is rather slow in Sparta as compared with Troy, so she plans for a lover. She decides on Acis and has him present himself as a shepherd to Menelaus, who engages him as private secretary. The dangerous fatality of her ardor, which caused the war with Troy, strikes all the men about her, including old Palemon, the High Priest of Pallas.

A young soldier, gravely wounded, who had served his time fighting in the wars unchained by the beauty of Helen, arrives on the scene and tells her what he and all the young men think of her. His recital is not very flattering and he ends by saying that he has come in the justice of mankind to kill her. She knows men and her power over them too well to be disturbed by this. She displays her charms so well that he is fairly hypnotized and is added to her court.

The old priest, Palemon, grows jealous and imagines a way of getting rid of Menelaus and having Helen for himself. He brings a young girl dancer, who poses as an Iberian, but is really a Corinthian employed for this purpose. She seduces Menelau, which neither the ingenue libertine Glycere nor the charming Trojan prisoner Deidamie had been able to do. This Iberian dancer is supposed to carry off Menelaus by her charms, but she fails at the last minute, for he tires of her and goes off to find Helen. The latter suddenly finds Menelaus to be the best of husbands, so she condemns her lovers to marry the women attached to Menelaus, according to their choice, or else the ones nearest them. Thereby four marriages are consummated, and Menelaus and Helen are reconciled.

New Method Perfected

The Perfect Picture Company, of Los Angeles, has finished its feature production, with Barbara Bedford, Elliott Sparling and Noah Beery, to be shown in conjunction with its new method of stereoscopic exhibition.

Peggy Lytton, a Duchess in Albania, Is Stage Maid Here

First, she holds a war medal; is a member of the Royal Order of Queen Elizabeth and is a Chevalier of Leopold II—all from the Belgian government.

Second, France gave her a Red Cross "memory medal" and the Croix de Guerre.

Third, England awarded her the War Service Medal.

Lastly, the Albanian government created a title for her and in that country she is a duchess.

Now she is a delightful but withal meek and humble maid in Avery Hopwood's latest dramatic offering, "Why Men Leave Home," at the Morosco Theater.

In "Why Men Leave Home" her name is Peggy Lytton. But that is a stage name. Certainly the King of the Belgians, the President of France, the King of England and the King of Albania would not know her as Miss Lytton.

But if you mentioned Marguerite Mosely-Williams to any of those dignitaries it is more than likely they would be able to give you a story that would be well worth while listening to. For Miss Peggy Lytton, or otherwise Miss Marguerite Mosely-Williams, despite the fact she has lived only a few months over twenty-three years, has lived a lot in that brief space of time.

Miss Lytton is an English girl. At the beginning of the war she was a student in Switzerland. For three years she drove her ambulance on the western front of the World War. She had five different ambulances literally shot out from under her. She was shell-shocked and gassed.

Her decorations from Belgium were given, as officially described, "for sang-froid under fire."

France inscribed her decorations for "heroism during the air raids and the bombing of Calais."

England contented herself with saying "for distinguished service with the troops."

All that in the first three years of the war. Then Miss Lytton was forced to take a leave of absence. Her health had been undermined. She was discharged from the service with all the honors three nations could heap upon her.

In the course of her experience with the Allied troops she had heard much of the valor of the Albanian people. The romance of their existence and their fight for recognition attracted her. She determined to go to Albania.

Although without definite object in mind, Miss Lytton was not long at a loss for something to turn up once she had reached the country she had chosen to adopt as her own. The youth of the land she found to be a hardy, manly, sturdy lot of little fellows. In them she saw ideal material for boy scouts.

Presenting her ideas to the Albanian government, Miss Lytton readily secured permission to organize the Boy Scouts of Albania. It was constructive and educational work that Miss Lytton carried on, and when she finally decided that she wanted to come to America the Albanian government urged her to stay, offering her the post of Minister of Education.

She declined the post, feeling that she was not equipped to carry out the plans the government had for her. When she finally made it clear that nothing could persuade her to change her mind the Albanians created her a duchess.

And then Miss Lytton came to America—not to go on the stage, but to study. She enrolled at Barnard and took a special course. The hills and plains of Albania were calling to her and she believed some day she would return.

She still thinks she may. Broadway may have lured her. But it is hardly likely it will be for long.

Now Comes "Love Gambler"

The title of the new picture starring John Gilbert, has been changed from "Where the Heart Lies" to "The Love Gambler."

Basil Dean, Critic Of Modern Actor

Basil Dean, the English stage director, who produced Galsworthy's "Loyalties" in London and who came to this country to duplicate the production here, is a vigorous and sometimes violent critic of the star system and a passionate believer in the subordination of the actor's personality to everything else. He insists that the actor's art at the moment is being degraded both in England and America.

"The dramatist," said he the other day, "is just as much to blame as the artist for this condition and perhaps more so, for he knew better. Instead of encouraging the actor to create character he has insisted upon casting his plays around the physical attributes and personal idiosyncrasies of a few well known players. The thing began with Pinero and it has gone on ever since.

"Recently, while discussing a play with one of our new dramatists, I was horrified to find the vicious plant already in full flower. A well known actor spoke to me last year when I was doing a play and said, 'I'm so glad to be told exactly what to do in this part.' He made me go hot and cold all over. It wasn't my business to tell him these things. He'd had a lot more experience than I. It was just another illustration of the evil result of keeping the actor exploiting his own personality instead of mastering his art to its fullest possible extent.

"I have always felt that the true function of drama is emotion. There are moments in the lives of certain men when they are strangely and deeply stirred by the littlest things; the exquisite fashioning of a butterfly's wing, the dart of a fish under water, the smile of some dear old lady saying goodby at the railway station. The emotions of joy and pride in the deep mysteries of life may be stirred by any of these. The men who can feel these things are the artists of the world. It is part of the function of the actor to make understandable to his less receptive fellows some of the emotions which may be thus engendered."

At the St. Martin's Theater in London, where "Loyalties" is now enjoying great success, Mr. Dean plans to establish a permanent company for the presentation, over a series of years, of a long list of new plays. The "Loyalties" company is to be the nucleus of this organization. No one will be featured, no one will be given the slightest prominence over any one else; all will work for the good of the cause. As an instance of this submergence of self which is to be the keynote of the policy of this company, Mr. Dean cites the fact that Meggie Albanesi, the most talked of young actress in London at the present time (she it was who created a sensation as the young girl in "A Bill of Divorcement"), will have the microscopic role of a servant girl in the next play to be done at special matinees at the St. Martin's.

Where Mr. Craven Found the Folk Of "Spite Corner"

If you come from a small community tucked away among the rock-ribbed hills of New England (and there are a good many such in New York) it won't take you long to realize that the characters in Frank Craven's new comedy, "Spite Corner," at the Little Theater, are as homely and real and genuine as pumpkin pie. There is a reason: Frank Craven.

Craven's boyhood and youth were lived in New England, not in a city, not even in a town of any considerable size, but on a farm in the tight little community of Silver Lake, on Cape Cod. When he wrote "Spite Corner" it was a labor of love. He was writing what was in his heart. He was holding the mirror up to life as he knew it.

It was not on the farm, however, that he was born, but in Boston. His mother was an actress of the old school, of the day of the traveling stock players. So was his father. The latter, John, used to be a gas boy in the old Bowery, then became an actor and met his wife when both were playing in stock in Louisville. It was to Boston, then, that Mrs. Craven went for Frank's birth.

During the early years of his life he was taken about with them by his parents, and appeared on the stage at times when only a baby in arms. But when he became eight years old his parents decided the nomadic life of their profession was not exactly the thing for him, and left him with some good friends, the Chapmans, on a farm on the Cape.

There Frank lived—and worked, worked to a considerable extent, too, for on a New England farm there is not much time for idlers. When the summer season, with its cultivation and reaping, ended, autumn arrived with its berry picking. There were cranberries to be picked in the bogs and strawberries on the sandy farms.

As he talked of those bygone days a faraway look came into Craven's eyes, a tender twist of that mobile mouth and then—he pulled his familiar tough-looking cap over one eye, twisted the familiar black briar to one corner of his mouth and grinned.

Craven is like that. The imp of mischief is forever tying a tin can to the tail of romance.

And when winter came—school and more work. School was in a one-room schoolhouse, two and one-half miles from the Chapman farm. At that, Frank lived nearest of the thirteen farm children attending, except for Willie Whiting. Willie lived a little nearer school, but not much. Why, there were days in the winter when the snow lay so deep on all that countryside that they two were the only children who plowed their way to school.

As for work, there was a tack factory at Silver Lake, where Frank worked now and then as a feeder. And there was a sawmill, too, where on cold Sundays in the winter he would earn a half dollar by feeding chunks of wood to the fires and keeping up enough heat to prevent the mill from freezing. Just a little tad, in a raggedy coat and boots and a long, knitted muffler tied around his throat and head, he would struggle through the snow several miles to the mill, pull off his mittens, go in and sit there alone, feeding chunks of wood into the stove.

Old Eben Gooch, of "Spite Corner," played entrancingly by Percy Pollock, lived in Silver Lake neighborhood. So did Anne Coolidge, with her tatting and her dislike for improvers that cut down beautiful maple trees to make way for telegraph poles. Belle Burgess, the village dressmaker, who can tell the age of every skirt in town by the number of rings on the hem, "just like a horse's teeth"—she lived there, too. So did all those people, those richly human characters of "Spite Corner."

"I knew 'em all," said Craven. "Individualists grow in the country, where the oddities of character aren't robbed off by too frequent contact with others, as in the city. All I have to do is shut my eyes and there they stand before me. And—sometimes—I don't even have to shut my eyes.

"Huh."

He got up and stretched and knocked the ashes from a cold pipe.

Things Are Even Worse Than They Seem

Tallulah Bankhead Says It's No Laughing Matter This Being an Actress

"When I was twelve years old I used to think it was the best sport in the world to give impersonations of my step-mother. At that time dad said severely: 'The place for people to give impersonations is on the stage!' and the seed was planted. I replied, 'All right, let's go,' and three years later I did go. I went to New York to become an actress."

"Went from where?" Miss Bankhead was asked, for we neglected to say that it was Tallulah Bankhead who was talking.

"Went from Alabama—Alabama, where the falls come from. You mustn't tell any one, but I'm named after the falls—Tallulah Falls! Sounds prophetic, eh?" Tallulah's other name she inherited from a long line of Senators, Congressmen and statesmen, and we also inherited their brains. Her beauty, she told us, she got from her mother, of course. She didn't put it that way; for one thing Miss Bankhead lacks, and that is conceit. "Here's her picture," she added. "She died twenty years ago when I was born."

The longer you know Miss Bankhead the more you admire the foresight of the person who named her Tallulah after the falls. She is like that—sparkling, refreshing, restless and forceful. In our humble opinion Miss Bankhead has more talent and beauty than any young actress on the stage to-day. If you do not agree with us just go to see her performance of Rufus Rand in "The Exciters." There is a fine portrayal of a difficult role in an indifferent play.

The theater was crowded for the opening of Martin Brown's play, but of all Miss Bankhead's friends who sat out in front not one of them guessed the ordeal which the young star was going through. She was, so far as any one could know, perfectly at ease and very sure of herself. We envied her her self-possession and thought, "Here is at least one actress who does not know the meaning of stage fright," and then the curtain fell for the last time and we went back stage to see if Miss Bankhead would deliver a few of the bon mots for which she is famed, before calling it a day.

Now, we have seen many stars after a first night, but never have we seen one who reacted in this strange fashion. The girl who had been on the stage but a few moments before nonchalant and insolent or brilliant and haughty, but always complete mistress of herself and the situation, was wandering about her dressing room so dazed that she did not recognize any one. She had almost the appearance of one walking in her sleep. "Was I terrible?" she kept repeating, and then suddenly she broke down and cried tempestuously.

When we saw her later in the week Miss Bankhead could speak of it calmly and even laugh at herself.

"Is something wrong with me," she asked anxiously, "or do other actresses feel like that on opening nights? Why, for long stretches I was so nervous that I was not really conscious of what I was doing or saying. It was agony."

It isn't pleasant for the actress, perhaps, but it's the penalty one pays for being different from most people.

H. U.

The Playbill

(Continued from page one)

City, to-morrow night. . . . OLIVER MOROSCO is sending the productions of "Mike Angelo," the play in which LEO CARILLO is to appear, and of THOMPSON BUCHANAN'S "Sporting Thing to Do" East. He plans to present them here before November 1. . . . STEWART & FRENCH, who produced "The Torch-Bearers," now at the Vanderbilt, have accepted two comedies by GEORGE KELLY, the play's author, for early production. Numerous managers and stars sought the plays. ROSALIE STEWART, the right wing of this firm, is the second woman producer to reach Broadway this season. While she is a newcomer as a dramatic producer, hers is a lustrous name in vaudeville. In the last five years Miss Stewart has produced a trifle more than 25 per cent of the big acts on the "big time" circuits. BERT FRENCH, her partner, formerly a dancer, put on a number of her vaudeville acts. . . . JANET ADAIR, now prominent in the cast of "The Passing Show of 1922" at the Winter Garden, has been under the SHUBERT banner for several years. She will be remembered in the exploitation of Al Jolson's "Bombo" last season. She has been in other "Passing Shows" and her work has sometimes made Broadway wonder why somebody didn't put her in an outright dramatic production.

Blanche Ring Returns

Blanche Ring and Charles Winninger, in a condensed version of "As You Were," will be offered by the Shuberts at the Central Theater, beginning to-morrow afternoon. Bert Baker, Dell Tell and Covey, Elby and St. Leo, the Pasquali Brothers and other acts are also on the bill.

"Blossom Time" Moves

"Blossom Time," after its long run at the Ambassador, will make way to-morrow night for another Shubert musical production, moving further uptown to Jolson's Theater.